

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USNMR SHAPE
CINCEUR

S E C R E T STATE 096011

EXDIS MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ANKARA, ATHENS,
BONN, COPENHAGEN, LISBON, LONDON, LUXEMBOURG, OSLO, OTTAWA,
PARIS, MADRID, REYKJAVIK, ROME, THE HAGUE, NATO BRUSSELS
FROM BRUSSELS 24 APR.

QUOTE: S E C R E T BRUSSELS 3641

EXDIS

DEPT PASS TO USNMR SHAPE AND USCINCEUR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NATO, SP, BE
SUBJECT: SPAIN AND NATO

REF: STATE 91998

SUMMARY. IN RESPONSE TO OUR DETAILED PRESENTATION MADE
PURSUANT TO REFTTEL, BELGIAN INITIAL REACTION WAS STRONG
OPPOSITION TO TAKING ANY STEPS TO IMPROVE SPAIN'S
RELATION TO NATO WHILE FRANCO REMAINS IN POWER. BELGIANS
FURTHER HOPE THIS ISSUE WILL NOT RPT NOT BE ON AGENDA
OF NATO SUMMIT MEETING. END SUMMARY.

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1. WE MADE DETAILED PRESENTATION ON APRIL 24 TO FOREIGN MINISTRY CHIEF OF NATO AFFAIRS OF US GENERAL THINKING BASED ON PARA 3 AND TELS CITED IN PARA 4 OF REFTEL. WE STRESSED FRANKNESS OF US VIEWS AND ASKED, AND WERE ASSURED, THAT THESE VIEWS WOULD BE TREATED WITH APPROPRIATE DISCRETION.

2. BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY REACTION WAS IMMEDIATE AND STRONGLY OPPOSED. THEIR POSITION IS SUMMARY WAS THAT THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE IS BASED ON SHARED PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLOOKS AS SPELLED OUT IN THE OTTAWA DECLARATION, WHICH FRANCO SPAIN DOES NOT SHARE WITH THE OTHER ALLIES. THEY STRESSED THAT BELGIUM WAS NOT ANTI-SPANISH, BUT THAT BELGIUM WAS AND REMAINED STRONGLY ANTI-FRANCO. THIS POSITION BEGAN DURING THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR (IN WHICH MANY BELGAINS PARTICIPATED), WAS REINFORCED BY FRANCO'S LINKS WITH NAZI GERMANY AND THE DIFFICULTIES CAUSED BELGIAN WWII REFUGEES TRANSITTING SPAIN, CONTINUED AFTER WWII WHEN FRANCO PROVIDED THE BELGIAN TRAITOR DEGRELLE WITH SAFEHAVEN, AND CONTINUE TO THE PRESENT WITH REPEATED SPAISH OFFICIAL OBJECTIONS TO BELGIANS STATE-OWNED RADIO PROGRAMS, BANNINGS OF BELGIAN FILMS AND EXPLUSIONS OF BELGIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS.

3. BELGIANS SAID THAT THEY HAD NOTICED THAT SPANISH DIPLOMACY HAD RECENTLY, AND ESPECIALLY SINCE THE OVERTHROW OF CAETANO, BECOME MORE ACTIVE. THEY SAID THAT THE SPANISH FEEL THEIR PRESENT ISOLATION AND ARE SEEKING LINKS WHEREVER THEY CAN, INCLUDING WITH THE EC-9. THEY REPORTED IN ADDITION THAT NO MONTH GOES BY WITHOUT A SPANISH REQUEST TO HAVE A MINISTERIAL-LEVEL OFFICIAL RECEIVED IN BELGIUM. BELGIANS CHARACTERIZED THIS NEW ACTIVITY AS A "DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE" AND ATTRIBUTE IT TO THE APPROACHING END OF THE FRANCO REGIME.

4. IN ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF LINKING SPAIN TO THE WEST, THE BELGIANS GAVE THEIR OPINION THAT TIMING WAS CRITICAL. TO ESTABLISH SPAIN-NATO LINKS BEFORE THE END OF THE FRANACO REGIME WOULD CAUSE A POPULAR REACTION

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IN SPAIN AGAINST NATO AFTER FRANCO PASSES FROM THE SCENE. THEY FURTHER SAID THAT A SIMILAR ANTI-NATO REACTION COULD BE EXPECTED AMONG NATO ALLIES (CITING THE NETHERLANDS, DENMARK AND NORWAY PARTICULARLY) SHOULD NATO-SPAIN LINKS BE ESTABLISHED WHILE FRANCO REMAINS IN POWER. THEY SUGGESTED THAT THE TIME TO ESTABLISH SUCH LINKS WOULD BE PROPITIOUS AS SOON AS THERE WAS ANY POST-FRANCO EVIDENCE THAT SPAIN WAS EVOLVING TOWARDS

A MORE LIBERAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT. TO TAKE STEPS
TOWARD LINKING SPAIN TO NATO BEFORE THERE WAS SUCH
EVIDENCE OF "LIBERALIZATION" WOULD ONLY SERVE TO
REINFORCE FASCIST ELEMENTS WHO WOULD TEND TO HOLD
ONTO POWER POINTING TO THE SUCCESS OF THEIR DIPLOMACY.

5. INITIAL BELGIAN REACTION TO OUR APPROACH WAS THAT ANY
STEPS TAKEN TO LINK SPAIN WITH NATO COULD, IF THE BELGIAN
GOVERNMENT WENT ALONG, LEAD TO ITS DOWNFALL AND FURTHER
WOULD UNDERMINE POPULAR SUPPORT IN BELGIUM FOR CONTINUED
PARTICIPATION WITHIN THE ALLIANCE. THEY SAID THEY WERE
SURE THAT NOT ONLY THE SOCIALIST OPPOSITION WOULD USE
THIS ISSUE IN ORDER TO ATTACK THE TINDEMANS GOVERNMENT,
BUT THAT IT COULD PROVIDE A PRETEXT FOR STREET DEMONSTRATIONS
AGAINST THE US AND NATO AS WELL.

6. IN CONCLUSION, THE BELGIANS URGED THAT THIS MATTER
NOT BE RAISED AT THE NATO SUMMIT MEETING AS IT WAS
UNRESOLVABLE AND TOO EMOTION-LADEN TO TREAT AT SUCH
A FORUM.
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